

Hubbards Fort  
Rock Creek Park  
Washington  
District of Columbia

HAER N-1. DC-28

HAER  
DC  
WASH,  
589-

PHOTOGRAPHS  
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Engineering Record  
National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
Washington, DC 20013-7127

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**HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD**  
**MILKHOUSE FORD**  
**HAER No. DC-25**

**Location:** Milkhouse Ford is located on Rock Creek, east of Beach Drive and approximately three-fourths mile north of Military Road, in Rock Creek Park, Washington, D.C.

**Date of Construction:** 1904.

**Designer and Builder:** U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

**Present Owner:** National Park Service.

**Present Use:** Ford.

**Significance:** The only operable creek crossing in Rock Creek Park, Milkhouse Ford survives as a reminder of the days when fords were plentiful in the area, and were the only means of traversing the creek. Regular use of this ford has been superseded by the adjacent bridge--first built in 1926--which now carries automobile traffic across Rock Creek at this point.

**Project Information:** The documentation of Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway was undertaken as a two-year pilot project to help establish standards and guidelines for recording the structures and landscape features of park roads and parkways. This project was a joint effort of the Historic American Buildings Survey and the Historic American Engineering Record (HABS/HAER), a combined division of the National Park Service, Robert Kapsch, chief. The project was sponsored by the Park Roads Program of the National Park Service, John Gingles, deputy chief, Safety Services Division. The project supervisor was Sara Amy Leach, HABS historian.

The Washington-based summer 1992 documentation team was headed by landscape architect Robert Harvey (Iowa State University-Department of Landscape Architecture) who served as field supervisor; the landscape architects were Deborah Warshaw (University of Virginia) and Dorota Pape-Siliwonzuk (US/ICOMOS-Poland, Board of Historical Palaces and Gardens Restoration); the architects were Evan Miller (University of Colorado-Boulder), Steven Nose (University of Maryland), and Tony Arcaro (Catholic University). The historians were Tim Davis (University of Texas) and Amy Ross (University of Virginia). Jack E. Boucher made the large-format photographs; Air Survey Corporation of Sterling, Virginia, produced the aerial photography and digital mapping from which the site-plan delineations were made.

### History

Milkhouse Ford was one of at least a half-dozen natural creek crossings in early times-- located at a point where the flow of water generally did not exceed a few inches.<sup>1</sup> In 1904, \$800 was spent on paving this ford, which had previously been of a rough character. Before 1926, Milkhouse Ford was the only means of reaching Beach Drive on the west side of the creek north of the Military Road.

Milkhouse Ford Road was the long-standing name of the old country road that ran from "Tennallytown" to the intersection of North Capitol Street and New Hampshire Avenue. Some parts of this road survive as part of Daniels Road.<sup>2</sup>

### Description

The concrete paving, laid in 1904, was 24' wide x 74' long. The depth of the concrete ranged from 6" to 8". Its approaches were paved with granite block, which has subsequently been replaced with cobblestone. Two irregularly coursed rubblestone structures flank the crossing, which incorporate benches for pedestrians.<sup>3</sup>

Prepared by:  
Amy Ross  
HABS/HAER Historian  
Summer 1992

### Bibliography:

Board of Control of Rock Creek Park. Report of the Secretary, Operations from the Establishment of the Park, September 27, 1890 to June 30, 1912. Washington, D.C.: Board of Control, 1912.

Bushong, William. Historic Resource Study: Rock Creek Park, District of Columbia. Washington, D.C.: National Park Service, 1990.

Spratt, Zack. "Rock Creek Bridges." Records of the Columbia Historical Society 53-56 (1959): 101-34.

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<sup>1</sup> Board of Control of Rock Creek Park, Report of the Secretary, Operations from the Establishment of the Park, September 27, 1890 to June 30, 1912 (Washington, D.C.: Board of Control, 1912), 14.

<sup>2</sup> Zack Spratt, "Rock Creek Bridges," Records of the Columbia Historical Society 53-56 (1959): 107, 116, 120.

<sup>3</sup> William Bushong, Historic Resource Study: Rock Creek Park, District of Columbia (Washington, D.C.: National Park Service, 1990), 177.